

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claim 1. (original): A method for assigning node numbers to network nodes in a network, the method comprising the steps of:

connecting the network to a central device performing administration of the node numbers available for the network;

transmitting a request message to the central device;

ascertaining a free node number from available node numbers via the central device; and

transmitting and assigning the ascertained node number to a network node.

Claim 2. (original): A method for assigning node numbers to network nodes in a network as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the request message is transmitted from a network node which has not yet been assigned a node number to the central device if the network node is being newly registered on the network.

Claim 3. (original): A method for assigning node numbers to network nodes in a network as claimed in Claim 2, the method further comprising the steps of:

administering node-specific data locally by the network node if the central device is not active at an instant at which the network node is registered; and

bringing into line and updating the locally administered data when the central device has been activated.

Claim 4. (original): A method for assigning node numbers to network nodes in a network as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the request message is transmitted to the central device if a change needs to be made for the already assigned node number.

Claim 5. (original): A method for assigning node numbers to network nodes in a network as claimed in Claim 4, wherein a newly assigned node number is accepted by a network node only if the central device is authorized to assign node number.

Claim 6. (original): A method for assigning node numbers to network nodes in a network as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the request message is transmitted from a network node to the central device if the network node previously has received a polling message from the central device, and the node has not yet been assigned a node number.

Claim 7. (original): A method for assigning node numbers to network nodes in a network as claimed in Claim 6, the method further comprising the step of:

transmitting node-specific information from the network node to the central device within the context of the polling message.

Claim 8. (original): A method for assigning node numbers to network nodes in a network as claimed in Claim 1, wherein at least one of the request message and the polling message are transmitted via a temporary signaling connection within the network.

Claim 9. (original): A system for assigning node numbers to network nodes in a network, comprising:

a central device for administering the node number available for the network; and  
a local communication unit at least one of the network nodes for communicating with the central device, the local communication unit able to assign a free node number ascertained by the central device within the context of a request message to a network node.

Claim 10. (original): A system for assigning node number to network nodes and a network as claimed in Claim 9, wherein the central device is connected to one of the network nodes in the network via a local area network.